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rows regarding a pygmy who ate sixty bananas at a meal, he hastens to reassure us by saying, "Geil, however, denies that Pygmies eat sixty bananas at a sitting."

What does Dowd mean by the statements "Stanford believes . . .," "But Stanford overlooks the fact . . ." *Stanford's Compendium* is useful and well known, but does a man of science make such careless and misleading references to authorities? It is as doubtful that Stanford believes or overlooks as that Macmillan mentions hundred-foot boas.

Dowd himself indulges not infrequently in dry humor; in fact he has a true ministerial delight in his own quips and fancies. Such pleasantries as the following occasionally enlighten the gloom of his discussion: "When ready for a change of camp, it is only necessary to gather up the babies and whistle for the dogs. The entire household and kitchen furniture of a Pygmy family could have been lost in Lady Wouter Van Twiller's skirt pocket."

We have gone thus fully into a notice of Mr Dowd's work for two reasons: First, the magnitude of the work planned demands a serious questioning of its actual value; second, the fact that it emanates from the Macmillan house raises a presumption in its favor. We have tried to present a fair judgment. There may be some to whom the work will appeal; the anthropologist will be profoundly disappointed in it.

FREDERICK STARR.

*Le Plateau Central Nigérien.* Par LOUIS DESPLAGNES. Paris: 1907. 8°, 504 pp. (12 francs.)

This volume is the result of an archeological and ethnographic mission to the French Soudan by Lieutenant Louis Desplagnes of the Colonial Infantry. The book has received the recognition of the French government, and actually forms a serious and valuable contribution to our knowledge of the region to which it relates. It is illustrated by two hundred and thirty-six cuts reproduced from original photographs, and by an excellent map.

The area, in so far as its human population is concerned, has been one of extraordinary movement, displacement, and mixture. In disentangling the difficult problem it presents to the student, Desplagnes recognizes four ethnic elements: I. Toward the end of the Quaternary, the Saharan and Soudan region was occupied by a people of an advanced neolithic culture, related to if not identical with that of the Ethiopic population, which at that time, according to Blanckenhorn, populated Egypt. Desplagnes believes this population was Hamitic-Lybyan from Arabia, entering Africa in the north. It used flint and jasper implements, stone

vessels, and pottery ; it did not know how to make brick or tile. Its people were nomad-hunters ; their dead chiefs were cremated, common people were buried. II. Traces of this ancient neolithic population are still to be found in traditions, customs, habits, and industries. Castes and families, or even whole tribes, are found here and there throughout the entire area, which are plainly descended from them. Physical type, language, mode of life, still connect these survivors with the ancient past. While the most of their totemic system has disappeared under the influence of repeated invasions, there persists in names the suggestion of a fish clan, indicated in names containing the syllable *ma*. These people are hunters and fishermen, they conduct a rude agriculture, crush grain in stone mills, and make a decorated pottery. Men wear a stone arm-ring. Their worship involves libation and sacrifice to local spirits and to fire, to the sun (as female), to the moon (as male), and to outside, inclusive, all-powerful, creative force called Amma. This trinity (male, female, inclusive creative force) is interesting : still more is its division of tribes into male and female according to which deity they worship. This duality and trinity is betrayed in the naming of families, the decorations of monuments, and the form of altars. Thus the trinity is worshipped upon an altar of three points. Men are circumcised, sex relations are free, and polygamy is common. The dead are stowed away, in a flexed position, in fissures among rocks and in burial vases. Chiefs formerly were buried in chambers under tumuli, in the earth mass of which the common people were interred. III. "Red" people from the north descended upon these neolithic primitives. Their totems were birds and their descendants are still traceable through their names. Of the movements of these we have both historic and traditional information. They, at first, consisted of a triad of tribes — *Oua-Kore* white birds, *Oua-Gara* red birds, and *Oua-Bibi* black birds. Their first great capital was Ganna, and they subjugated the old fish-peoples, whom they encountered. Their arrival was long ago, though the date cannot be stated. They brought with them knowledge of iron, of constructing houses of earth, brick, and stone. Their area is archeologically traceable by tombs with funnels and tumuli of the age of iron with a central chimney-like tube. These and ruins of buildings occur over a vast district. These buildings are characterized by a special ornamentation. The red people wove wool with decorative patterns in the texture, made filigree, and cast metal by the *cire perdu* process. They used nets in fishing, and turned pottery on the wheel. They introduced the cow, horse, goat, and sheep. They dug excellent wells. Their religious ideas were notably unlike those of their

predecessors and included ancestor-worship (offerings made on both graves and altars). The dead were buried, extended at full length, in rock chambers or under tumuli; the bodies were oriented according to sex and occupation. The sepulchral chamber was always connected with the exterior by some sort of tube. These people appear to have introduced human sacrifice, burying young girls alive on founding towns. The females were respected, enjoyed great freedom, and might partake in political affairs. Marriage was by mutual agreement, although the fiction of capture occurred and prohibitions relative to parents-in-law existed. Polygamy was not common and was chiefly practised by chiefs. Villages combined into confederacies, which were directed by the council of elders. These and some other customs are clearly akin to those of Berbers. Examination of language and customs shows these red invaders to represent two groups. One, the older, came early, mingled profoundly with the primitive inhabitants, and seem to have brought in Phenician-Egyptian and Lybian-Berber ideas. The other group was of pastoral peoples, who filtered in slowly; they were the non-progressive, conservative, poorer part of the "reds." Though far from ethnically pure, they best preserve the types and language. They are represented in the Foulbes of today. This whole immigration is sometimes called "red Ethiopians," and in addition to the cultural elements already mentioned it brought in some Semitic or Babylonian influences. IV. This mixed culture was next subjected to a series of invasions of barbaric and destroying peoples coming from the east and south. They were nomad-shepherds and forest dwellers, forming the clan of the serpent. Their first invasion was that of the Soussous, who founded the empire of the Mossis, overturning that of the Oua Kore by destroying its capital Ganna about 1230. They have carried on their conquests until they have reached the Atlantic coast. Their culture was notably inferior to that which preceded them. They did not work iron, make pottery, or weave stuffs. Their vessels were made chiefly from calabashes; they did not use brick or stone in construction, nor grind grains. They occupied cylindrical earthen houses with conical thatched roofs. Polygamy prevailed, and women, regarded as inferiors, were bought and sold. The body was scarified and teeth were chipped. Government was feudal and centralized. War was constant, for the getting of slaves and workers. The people were superstitious, and their religion was coarse and fetishistic; magic was practised. Boys were circumcised and excision was performed upon girls. Such, in briefest possible outline, are the conclusions to which our author is led from a study of his whole evidence,

diligently gathered from many and differing fields. It is impossible to discuss here his conclusions or evidence for lack of space.

We may however mention two points of special interest in connection with his treatment. To a considerable degree the author makes use of the analysis of tribal and confederation names as a clue in tracing intermixtures and unions. Thus *ma* as an element in such names suggests the fish-peoples, the original prehistoric population; *oua* suggests the bird-peoples, the civilizing "reds"; *so* suggests the late-coming snake-peoples, with their degenerating influences. While other writers have made use of similar analysis of tribal names in northern Africa, it is perhaps safe to say that no one has applied the method so widely and with better apparent result. Again the author presents at full length a series of curious tribal traditions, *Les legendes de Farang, roi de Gao*. In many respects these resemble tribal hero-tales in general. Here, however, they are assumed to have historical suggestiveness and are considered to portray in figurative expression actual conflicts between the victorious invading and the defeated resident populations. Admitting the validity of the above-mentioned detail of method, the results of thus considering these legends are startling. These two points in Desplagnes' method are deserving of careful consideration and weighing.

Much in the author's material well deserves mention, but space compels us to refer only to the significant and large contribution which he makes to archeology. Soudanese archeology has been a little-worked field. It proves to be quite rich and interesting. Desplagnes says: "The principal prehistoric monuments and archeological documents discovered in the western Soudan are:

- " 1. Camp-sites and workshops of the Stone Age.
- " 2. Neolithic instruments, arms, and tools.
- " 3. Lithic monuments ; raised stones and anthropoid menhirs.
- " 4. Ancient sepulchres — tombs, funerary chambers, tumuli.
- " 5. Defensive walls, megalithic enclosures, sites of old historic towns.
- " 6. Cliff designs, Berber (*Tafinagh*) inscriptions, Arabic inscriptions, and relatively recent manuscripts."

FREDERICK STARR.

*Mayan Nomenclature.* By CHARLES P. BOWDITCH. Cambridge, Mass.: The University Press, 1906. 8°, 12 pp. Privately printed.

The object of this paper is to show that there is no excuse for the errors of nomenclature in relation to the terms of the Maya Calendar to which several writers of the first rank have committed themselves and to which they have persisted in adhering. It is first shown that in the sys-